

Chico Unified School District
2023-24 School Year



May 2, 2023



Chico Unified School District Selects New Assistant Superintendent, Certificated Human Resources

Four leadership roles have been announced for the 2023-24 school year.

Chico, CA – Chico Unified School District is excited to announce the selection of four new staff in leadership positions for the 2023-24 school year.

Assistant Superintendent, Certificated Human Resources – John Shepherd

John Shepherd brings nearly three decades of educational experience to the Assistant Superintendent, Certificated Human Resources position. He has served as the Director of Secondary Education since 2019 and offers a host of knowledge gained from his vast range of roles throughout Chico Unified.

John Shepherd holds a Master's in Educational Administration from California State University, Chico. He has served with the California Network of School Leadership Coaching, is an active leadership mentor, and is a founder of Pleasant Valley High School Community Foundation.

Shepherd received recognition as a North State California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Model Coach. His ability to build strong relationships and his approachable, knowledgeable and genuine interest in helping others succeed will benefit the Human Resource Department's mission to hire and retain highly-qualified teachers and certificated staff.

Direct Student Support Services – Jennifer Skala

Jennifer has worked in many communities in California and spent a year working in Fort Collins, CO. She has worked in rural communities, as well as larger cities as a psychologist, program specialist and Director. Jennifer Skala has spent the past 20 years in the Chico area. In 2007, she began working in administration and completed her Doctorate in Educational Leadership in 2022. Serving as a Special Education Coordinator in 2022-2023, Jennifer Skala helped implement programs and services for learners with exceptionalities. Her commitment to collaboration with general and Special Education leaders and educators, parents and students will be vital in aligning the vision, mission and direction of the Special Education program within Chico Unified.

Chapman Elementary School Principal – Cristi Tellechea

Cristi Tellechea is a born and raised Chico local who spent the past 22 years serving in education. A love of teaching and a knack for leadership brought Cristi to Emma Wilson Elementary School, where she served as Assistant Principal during the 2022-23 school year. Cristi Tellechea has a Master's in Applied School Leadership, taught in the classroom for 14 years and worked in high school administration for seven years. Cristi Tellechea's collaborative experience and commitment to the community will positively impact Chapman Elementary School in her new leadership role.

Bidwell Junior High School Assistant Principal – Durell Siplin

We are excited to welcome Durell Siplin to Chico Unified School District for the 2023-24 school year. Durell Siplin previously served as an Assistant Principal in a neighboring district. He believes in the transformative power of education. Durell Siplin's leadership philosophy and belief that every interaction should leave people feeling valued, seen and heard will complement Bidwell Junior High School's collaborative campus culture.



Pictured from left to right: Jennifer Skala, Cristi Tellechea and Durell Siplin at the April 19, 2023 Board of Education Meeting.

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Additional Information

We sincerely thank our retiring staff for their combined service totaling over 60 years to Chico Unified!

- Assistant Superintendent of Certificated Human Resources – Jim Hanlon (22 years)
- Director of Student Support Services – Diane Olsen (8 years)
- Bidwell Junior High School Assistant Principal – Laurie DeBock (33 years)

Chapman Elementary School Principal – Previously Mike Allen was selected by the CUSD Personnel Commission to fulfill the Assistant Superintendent of Classified Human Resources Position.